AWARDS OF THE OFFICIAL REFEREES.

USE OF IMPROPER MATERIALS.

Mr. William Bell having commenced to build eleven houses in Eccleston-place, in the district of St. George, Hanover-square, the district-surveyor, in pursuance of what he considered his duty, gave him notice that the materials of which the walls were being constructed were not "wholly built of sound bricks or stone, or of such bricks and stone together, laid in and with mortar or cement, in such manner as to produce solid work." At the request of the builder, the matter was allowed to stand over for a fortnight to test the materials; but on again visiting the houses, the surveyor was of opinion that the sand brought in afterwards was no better than the sand or loam previously used, and the builder maintaining to the contrary, referred the matter to the official referees. The referees, after a survey, determined "that the materials referred to in the said requisition, and objected to by the district surveyor, viz., the silt, used as sand in making mortar, and the old bats used as bricks, will not, when laid together, form solid work within the meaning of the first-mentioned Act; but we are of opinion that the surveyor of the district would be justified in allowing mortar made with the material used as sand, to be used with sound whole bricks of the full size, or in allowing the bricks by him objected to, to be used with mortar of good quality in the said buildings, so that a sufficient number of whole bricks be employed with the bats to admit of proper bonding, and also by the insertion of hoop-iron bond, to secure safe structure without timber laid continuously as bond plates or otherwise."

WESTMINSTER COURT OF SEWERS.

A general Court of Sewers for the city and liberty of Westminster was held on Friday, the 9th inst., Capt. Bague, R. N., in the chair. The solicitor to the commission reported to the court, that a bill of considerable importance had been introduced into the House of Commons by Lord Morpeth, Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests, having for its object the improvement of the health of towns and the sanatory condition of the people. This bill at the same time aimed at the existence of the whole of the Commissions of Sewers. Mr. Smith then pointed out the intended operation of the various clauses.

The subject led to a long conversation, in which most of the members present took part, and it was eventually resolved, "That a committee of this court be appointed to take into consideration the bill for the improvement of the health of towns, and that they do report to a future court; and that the following commissioners be appointed members of the committee:—Capt. Bague, Messrs. E. Willoughby, J. Le Breton, T. L. Donaldson, T. Harrison, Alderman Johnson, and — Allason.

A communication was read by the clerk from the City of London Commission of Sewers, asking the co-operation of this commission with them in giving the strongest opposition to the measure.

The court then proceeded to open the tenders sent in for making 1,155 feet of sewer in the Fulham-road, near the Consumption Hospital, which were as under:—

Messrs. Starkie	£1,050	0
Mr. W. Harding	1,018	0
Mr. W. Dethick	872	0
Mr. Yeoman	835	0
Messrs. J. and S. Williams	765	0
Messrs. Hill and Son	757	0
Messrs. Humphries and Thirsk	687	0
Mr. Hobbs	613	10

Several questions were put to Mr. Hobbs by the court as to what work he had performed, and whether he was aware of what would be required of him. Mr. Hobbs replied, that he was quite prepared to execute the work according to the terms of their specification. His tender was accordingly received.

The surveyor to the court handed in a very voluminous report, accompanied by numerous plans and drawings, recommending the entire re-arrangement and re-construction of the sewers in the district of All Souls, situate in the parish of Marylebone, eastward of Portland-place, involving an expenditure of 20,140*l.*, which report was ordered to be taken into consideration at the next meeting of the court. This report has engaged the surveyor nearly twelve months in its preparation.

The Westminster Improvement Commissioners.—Mr. Abrahams, the architect to the Westminster Improvement Commissioners, attended the court this day, and said that he was authorised by the commissioners to accede to the terms proposed for covering over the Kings' Scholars' Pond Sewer, excepting that it was their opinion that they should not be called upon to contribute towards the expense of covering 200 feet at one end, not necessarily included in their plan of improvement, but that it should be postponed, and perhaps the owners of the property would pay a portion of the expense. Rather, however, than the whole plan should be abandoned, they (the commissioners) would pay the amount required.

The clerk then read several letters from owners of the property intersected by this open sewer, and amongst them one from the Marquis of Westminster, *refusing to pay anything whatever* to the proposed improvement. In answer to a commissioner, the clerk said, that the property belonging to the Marquis of Westminster comprised a considerable portion of the district, and that his quotum of the expense of the proposed improvement would be something less than 10*l.* It was finally arranged that the whole of the work should be done at the joint expense of the Westminster Improvement Commissioners, and of the Westminster Commission of Sewers.

The surveyor reported that no attention had been paid to the orders of the last court, as to the improper construction of a sewer with pit-sand mortar in Hereford-square, Brompton. It was then ordered that the owner and builder be summoned to appear before the next court.

PRODUCTS OF COMBUSTION.

Mr. Morrill Wyman, an American chemist, gives the following facts relating to combustion, in a recent treatise on ventilation:—

A pint of oil when burned produces a pint and a quarter of water; a pound of gas, more than two and a half pounds of water.

An argand gas-burner, in a shop window, will produce in four hours two and a half pints of water, which may be condensed upon the goods, the window, or any other cold substances.

The argand burner of the Boston Gas Company, with twenty-two holes, will produce in four hours, when burning at the rate of four feet per hour, twenty-two ounces, or a pint and six ounces of water, and four feet of carbonic acid, which will render *four hundred* cubic feet of atmospheric air unfit for respiration.

A pound of oil produces 2·86 pounds of carbonic acid, and consumes the oxygen contained in 13·26 cubic feet of atmospheric air.

A pound of coal-gas produces 2·56 pounds of carbonic acid, and consumes 4·25 cubic feet of oxygen, which is equivalent to that contained in 21·35 cubic feet of atmospheric air. For every cubic foot of gas burned, an equal quantity of carbonic acid is produced, and renders, according to Leblanc, 100 cubic feet of air unfit for respiration.

At a Court of Sewers held for the Holborn and Finsbury Divisions, on the 14th, the following tenders were received for construction of sewers in

	Hampstead-road	Rodney-st. Pentonville	Liverpool-street
Pilbrow	£ 1,995		
Hull and Son	1,750	2,197	4,454
Ward	1,737	2,000	
Yeoman	1,735	761	4,[illegible]
Jay	1,554	2,[illegible]	3,[illegible]
Dethick	1,[illegible]		
Johnson		2,[illegible]	4,[illegible]
Cutsworth			4,[illegible]
John Hill		2,257	4,[illegible]
Batterbury		2,[illegible]	4,[illegible]

For the Hampstead-road sewer, Mr. Jay's tender was accepted although not the lowest; for the Rodney-street and Liverpool-road sewers, Mr. Batterbury's tenders were accepted.

At a Court of Sewers held for the Tower Hamlets Division, on the 14th, the following tenders were received for a sewer in the Mile End-road, terminating at the Regent's Canal Bridge, viz.:—

Blackburn	£ 1,700
Stewart	1,[illegible]
Murray	1,[illegible]
Crook	1,[illegible]
Curtis	1,[illegible]
Livermore	1,[illegible]
Yeoman	1,[illegible]
Shoulder	1,[illegible]
Ward	1,[illegible]
Dethick	1,[illegible]
Hill	1,[illegible]
Jay	1,[illegible]
Hobbs	1,[illegible]
Pook	1,[illegible]
Welch	1,[illegible]

Mr. Jay's tender was accepted.

As an illustration of the demand for air to produce efficient lighting, we may mention the following:—In the vestry of a meeting-house in Boston, some years since, great complaint was made of the impurity of the oil used; it burned well for a time, when the lamps grew dim, and continued to grow more so through the evening. The sexton was directed to procure better; he tried many kinds, but all to no purpose. He had noticed, however, that the longer he was compelled to remain after the services, and listen to the complaints of the aggrieved, the better his lamps burned, which was soon interpreted to mean the improvement of the air consequent upon the opening of the doors and the departure of the audience.

GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE WITH MINES.

INSTITUTION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS.

At the meetings on March 30th and April 13th, the discussion upon Mr. Richardson's paper on the ventilation of mines, was continued to the exclusion of any other subjects. In the course of it, the interference of Government was strongly insisted upon by some, and as decidedly objected to by others. It was stated, that the foreign mines which were under the constant superintendence of Government engineers, far from being exempt from accident, were not only more liable to the effects of deficient ventilation, but that the actual loss of human life was greater than in England; and that if our mines were subject to the same trammels, the price of fuel must be unduly raised without an immunity from danger. There could be no objection on the part of the coal owners to the formation of an association for regularly inspecting and reporting upon the state of the various mines, and the communication between the various districts, of the methods found to succeed best under the attendant peculiar circumstances; but there were good reasons, it was said, why such a power should never be placed in the hands of any Government officers.

BLIND BUILDERS.

A correspondent calls our attention to the following tenders, delivered at the office of Mr. C. Foster, on the 12th inst., for certain alterations in a house at Islington:—

Pickford	£410
Bugg	404
Craber	346
Lloyd	338
Dove	295
Brake	265
Hill	195

The following list of tenders, sent in for the Newport Water Works, which have just been let (the lowest tender being accepted), may come under the same head:

Rennie and Co.	£30,400
B. James, jun.	27,896
Dd. Jones	18,000

Burial in Towns.—Death, like life, propagates itself (says Mr. G. A. Walker, in his third lecture on this subject, just now published). He exacts from the multitudinous population of this vast city his thousand victims weekly. In his turn he knocks at every man's door;—"the bright, the brave, the beautiful," the infant and the old man,—the young, the full of promise, the buoyant with expectation,—the outcast and the miserable, must one day change for eternity. A wise Providence has ordained that any habitual disregard of morality is soon followed by bodily suffering. Crime is invariably the parent of disease; and "such is the harmony always existing between religion and sound policy, that what is acknowledged as decorous and useful by the one, is also commanded and prescribed by the other." Our moral instincts, our religious sentiments, tell us that the sanctuary of the dead should remain inviolate; daily experience teaches that process which resolves the animal body into its elements is attended by the disengagement of matters highly injurious to the health of the living. Morality, religion, and the imperative demands of the public health, all point out the necessity of removing the so-called resting-places of the dead from the habitations of man.

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